

the people from the oil and gas monopolies. America must begin to take care of things at home to protect Social Security from privatization, to have the wealthy pay a fair share of the taxes. America must begin to take care of things at home, to have an exit strategy from Iraq to bring our troops home. America must begin to take care of things at home to rebuild the gulf coast, to rebuild the American economy, to rebuild hope in the future, to end fear and uncertainty.

Who will protect the American people if we do not? We will assure and must assure their education, jobs, living wages, health care, and retirement security. If we do not, who will?

IRAQIS TAKING CHARGE OF THEIR OWN NATION

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, Iraqis are not yet fully capable of defending themselves against the terrorists. But they are getting much closer.

In Tal Afar 5,000 Iraqis led 3,800 Americans in taking back the town from terrorists. The force killed 157 terrorists, captured 440, seized 34 weapons caches. The victory is a watershed moment in the war against terror. It was the largest urban offensive in Iraq since Americans led the Fallujah offensive last year. It is proof that with proper training Iraqis can do it better than us.

In Fallujah, the Americans withdrew and the terrorists reappeared. In Tal Afar, though, Iraqis are weeding out the terrorists and seeding the town with security forces. This will become the model for future operations in towns like Ramadi. Upcoming elections and the permanent establishment of the Iraqi constitution will lend legitimacy to this young democracy and move them closer to victory. Another ally in the cause of freedom.

FLOOD INSURANCE REFORM

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, despite our recent flood insurance reforms, Katrina revealed that much remains to be done. Damage on a massive scale triggered payouts and borrowing that mean the program must be revised, including a significant one-time-only subsidy. We should reconsider who must be covered and how the insurance premiums will be paid as well as the tricky question of flood versus wind damage. And certainly more attention must be given to the role and responsibilities of communities to make their citizens safer. It is very likely that some of the weakest regulatory protections in the Nation contributed to the Katrina devastation.

I urge my colleagues to join me in this critical effort to fix the flood in-

surance program today and reform it for the future.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, fiscal responsibility is one of those tenets of our Republican philosophy. It is something our constituents remind us of every day. A constituent called yesterday following our Operation Offset press conference. She liked what she saw. Her advice was an old adage from her granny: Mind your pennies and your dollars will mind themselves.

I said, No, we're minding your pennies, the taxpayers' pennies, their dollars. This is their money. It is not government's money. We need to remember that.

Mr. Speaker, this House under our Republican leadership has passed a 2006 budget that worked to reduce discretionary spending. It is a great step in beginning to rein in the growth of government. I commend them for that. This House has passed tax relief that has led to 3 million new jobs being created. We need to keep that. I want to thank the leadership for that good work and to thank them for encouraging every Member of this body to work with them to find a way for us to address the needs that our Nation has in response to Hurricane Katrina. I want to thank Republican Study Committee Chairman PENCE for his good work on Operation Offset in providing us with another opportunity to reaffirm that we are the party of fiscal responsibility.

KATRINA AND IRAQ COSTS

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, the double standard in this Congress takes your breath away. In the 2½ years since I have been in Congress, this body has allocated nearly \$400 billion for Iraq without a worry about the deficit. You have funded three wars with four tax cuts and added \$3 trillion to the Nation's debt. Yet when this Congress is facing a tab for rebuilding the lives of Americans that is roughly half of what we have spent in the Iraqi war, suddenly everybody is a deficit hawk in this institution.

In Iraq we have spent millions to rebuild the Sweet Water Canal system, including the repair of the levee system. But here in America we cut levee construction and repair for Louisiana by 80 percent. When it comes to rebuilding Iraq, this Congress writes hot checks. Rebuilding America? You want to cut education and health care. Your inconsistency is breathtaking, especially when America draws the short stick. When it comes to rebuilding in the gulf coast, you are turning yourself

into pretzels, all to protect tax cuts for the wealthy.

But rebuilding Iraq should not come at the expense of America's future. Everyone must have skin in the game when it comes to meeting our challenges. Freedom is not free. This Congress cannot have one set of books and one set of priorities for Iraq and another for the American people and their future.

LAWSUIT ABUSE AWARENESS WEEK

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, as a third generation physician, I have seen health care in our Nation change in the most dynamic of ways. Advances in medicine and technology have improved the lives of millions of people. Today, however, the doctor-patient relationship that is so critical in providing quality health care is being exploited. It is no wonder that four out of every five Americans are wary of frivolous lawsuits in health care. Insurance companies, personal injury trial lawyers and even the potential of a lawsuit are leading hospitals to close their doors and doctors to stop practicing faster than ever before.

Lawsuit Abuse Awareness Week begins on October 3, not a moment too soon. Health care decisions must and should be made in the clinic and the operating room, not the courtroom. Decisions should be in the best interests of patients, not in the best interests of the pocketbooks of personal injury lawyers. I have seen it happen myself, with doctors making medical decisions out of fear of lawsuits, not from what they learned in medical school. That is not why they devoted their lives to medicine. Their only desire is to help heal people, not worry about whether their diagnosis would be put on trial.

HONORING MANUEL ESQUEDA

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Mr. Manuel Esqueda, a retired banker who over his lifetime helped send nearly 2,000 Latino students to college, many of whom were the first in their families to go.

Manuel's dedication to his community and education came from his deep-seated connection to the Delhi neighborhood of Santa Ana, California, where he grew up and where his family was able to buy a home when other Mexican Americans were unable to do so. He was active in the development of the Delhi Community Center, which is now a centerpiece of that neighborhood.

In honor of his community service, the Manuel Esqueda Elementary